

Yellowstone National Park Trip Planner

2011



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High Altitude Most of the park is above 7,500 feet (2,275 m). Allow time to acclimate and drink plenty of liquids. Visitors with cardiac or respiratory medical histories should contact a physician prior to their visit.

Weather Yellowstone's weather is unpredictable. Be prepared for changing temperatures, storms, and emergencies. Carry adequate clothing and gear.

Traffic Most roads are busy, narrow, and rough; some are steep with sharp drop-offs. Watch out for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, wildlife, and road damage. Pull into turnouts to let other cars pass. Always wear your seatbelt.

Bicycling Wear safety gear, including helmet and high visibility clothing. Park roads are narrow and winding with few shoulders. Road elevations range from 5,300–8,860 feet (1,615–2,700 m); long distances exist between services and facilities.

Falling Trees Avoid areas of dead trees (snags), which may suddenly fall—especially on windy days.

Stream Crossing High water conditions persist well into summer. If your plans include fishing or crossing streams, check at local ranger stations for water conditions.

Theft Lock your vehicle; keep valuables out of sight; label all valuable property with your name, address, or identification number. Report theft or vandalism to a ranger.

CAUTION: SCALDING WATER

Beautiful but deadly: Yellowstone's hydrothermal features can kill you. Their waters are frequently near or above boiling. The crust surrounding them is thin and breaks easily, and often overlies more scalding water. People have died in these pools. Be safe, be careful—enjoy the hydrothermal areas from a distance.

- **You must stay on boardwalks and designated trails.** They exist to protect you and to preserve delicate formations.
- Pets are prohibited in hydrothermal areas.
- Swimming or bathing is prohibited in hydrothermal pools or streams where water flows entirely from a hydrothermal spring or pool.
- Where swimming is allowed, swim at your own risk. Hydrothermal waters can harbor organisms that cause a fatal meningitis infection and Legionnaires' disease.
- Toxic gases exist at dangerous levels in some hydrothermal areas. If you feel sick, leave the location immediately.

WHERE ARE YOUR CHILDREN?

Your hand and voice may be too far away if your child leaves your side. Keep your children next to you and make sure they understand the hazards of Yellowstone—especially hydrothermal areas, wildlife, and steep drop-offs.

WATCH OUT! WILD ANIMALS ALL AROUND YOU

Yellowstone's animals are not tame, even though they may seem calm. **Do not approach any animals.** View them from the safety of your vehicle. **If an animal reacts to your presence, you are too close.**

Each year park visitors are injured when they approach animals too closely. **You must stay at least 100 yards (91 m) away from bears and wolves and at least 25 yards (23 m) away from all other animals—including bison, elk, bighorn sheep, deer, moose, & coyotes.**

BISON are unpredictable and dangerous, and every year visitors are injured. Bison weigh up to 2,000 pounds (900 kg) and sprint 30 miles per hour (48 kph)—three times faster than you can run.

BEARS may be seen from March through November, and sometimes in winter. Be alert for tracks and sign. Never approach animal carcasses. Report all bear sightings to a ranger.

COYOTES quickly learn habits like roadside begging. This may lead to



NPS photo/Schmidt

Bull elk sparring. Keep your distance!

aggressive behavior toward humans and can increase the risk of the coyote being poached or hit by a vehicle.

RAVENS have learned to unzip and unsnap packs. Do not allow them access to your food.

Do not feed any animals.
It harms them and it is illegal.

2 HIGHLIGHTS



NPS photo/Keller

Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River

History

People have been visiting and living in the Yellowstone area for thousands of years. In the mid 1800s, explorers and artists brought Yellowstone's wonders to the attention of the federal government. The park was established in 1872. Visit Mammoth Hot Springs

to walk the self-guiding trail around Fort Yellowstone, which chronicles the U.S. Army's role in protecting the park. Other historic sites include the Norris Geyser Basin Museum, Obsidian Cliff, and the Old Faithful Inn and Historic District.

Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone

This spectacular canyon, including Upper and Lower Falls of the Yellowstone River, can be seen from the overlooks and trails of the Canyon Village area, and from the Tower Fall and Calcite Springs overlooks south of Tower Junction.

Geysers & Hot Springs

Geysers, hot springs, mudpots, and fumaroles are evidence of ongoing volcanic activity. To see them, visit Mammoth Hot Springs, Norris Geyser Basin, Fountain Paint Pot & Firehole Lake Drive, Midway Geyser Basin, the Old Faithful area, West Thumb Geyser Basin, and Mud Volcano.

Lake Area

Yellowstone Lake is North America's largest high-altitude lake. The area is prime habitat for many birds and mammals. You can also enjoy boating, fishing, hiking, and viewing hydrothermal features.

Wildlife

You can see a variety and abundance of wildlife unparalleled in the lower 48 states. All the large mammals present when Yellowstone became a park are here today: grizzly and black bears, wolves, mountain lions, elk, bison, pronghorn, moose, and bighorn sheep. You'll also see a large variety of birds, including bald eagles. Check at a visitor center for the best wildlife viewing locations.

Wildflowers

Magenta and blue—the colors used in this planner—hint at the vibrant wildflowers that brighten Yellowstone in summer.

Read more about park highlights at www.nps.gov/yell

These facilities are open late May to late September

Fishing Bridge Visitor Center

Information, bookstore, and exhibits on the park's birds, wildlife, and lake geology.

Grant Visitor Center

Information, bookstore, exhibit and video on fire in Yellowstone.

Madison Information Station

Information and bookstore.

Museum of the National Park Ranger, Norris

Exhibits at this historic soldier station on the history of the park ranger profession.

Norris Geyser Basin Museum

Information, bookstore, and exhibits on the hydrothermal features of Yellowstone.

West Thumb Information Station

Information and bookstore.

Albright Visitor Center, Mammoth

Information, bookstore, exhibits on wildlife and history, and films on the national park idea, Yellowstone, and artist Thomas Moran.

All year, except Thanksgiving

West Yellowstone Visitor Information Center

Information and publications.

Late April–early November & Winter

Canyon Visitor Education Center

Explore the world of Yellowstone's super-volcano—an idea that has captured the minds and imaginations of people around the world. You can see, hear, and learn how the Yellowstone volcano, its geysers and hot springs, and geologic history influence all life found here.

May–early October

VISITOR CENTERS & MUSEUMS

New! Old Faithful Visitor Education Center

Discover secrets of geysers and other hydrothermal wonders, and the fascinating story of life in extreme environments. The Old Faithful Visitor Education Center is one of the few national park visitor centers to achieve Gold LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design).

*Open mid April–early November & Winter
Winter access via guided snowcoach or snowmobile tours.*



NPS photo/Peaco

3 WHAT TO DO

For current schedules of activities, consult the park website (www.nps.gov/yell) or the park newspaper when you arrive.

PROGRAMS & TOURS



NPS photo

Interpretive Park Ranger Programs

Rangers lead activities and programs—from short walks to evening campfire programs—during the summer and winter seasons. They also rove through major park feature areas to answer your questions and help you understand the many wonders of Yellowstone.

Especially for Children

The Junior Ranger and Young Scientist programs promote involvement in and understanding of Yellowstone; ask about them at visitor centers or check www.nps.gov/yell/forteachers/index.htm.

Yellowstone Association Institute

The park's official educational partner offers wildlife watching tours, backpacking trips, and short courses. Most programs are based at the Lamar Valley field campus or park hotels. Call 406-848-2400 or visit www.YellowstoneAssociation.org.

Other Activities

Many authorized guides and outfitters are ready to show you the wonders of Yellowstone, and each has a unique approach. To learn about these authorized providers, write to Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190, call 307-344-7381, or visit www.nps.gov/yell.

DRIVING THE PARK

The Grand Loop Drive to major features on this narrow, winding road. Allow plenty of time for driving.

Summer Park roads are generally open for travel, barring accidents, rock and mud slides, or road construction.

Autumn Storms may cause temporary restrictions (chain or snow tire requirements) or closures of roads. Park roads close on the first Monday of November, except the road from Gardiner to Cooke City, MT, which is open all year.

Road construction occurs each year; check at a visitor center upon arrival.

Winter All roads and entrances, with one exception, are closed to motor vehicle travel; some may be groomed for over-snow vehicles. The North Entrance road from Gardiner to Cooke City, MT, is open to wheeled vehicles and may close due to storms. Mud/Snow tires are recommended and often required. You must return to the North Entrance to leave the park.

Spring Park roads open by sections beginning the third Friday in April. Storms may cause restrictions or closures.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Deluxe Trip Planner from the nonprofit Yellowstone Association includes everything you need to plan a fun and educational visit to Yellowstone: *Yellowstone: The Official Guide to Touring America's First National Park*, *Yellowstone Trails: A Hiking Guide*, National Geographic Yellowstone Park Map, *Yellowstone and Grand Teton Road Guide*, and *Large Mammals of Yellowstone*. Package Price—\$29.95 (\$41.30 if purchased separately). To order, call 406-848-2400 or visit www.YellowstoneAssociation.org.



ON YOUR OWN

Bicycling is allowed on public roads, parking areas, and designated routes; it is prohibited on boardwalks and backcountry trails.

Boating is allowed on most of Yellowstone Lake and on Lewis Lake. Only non-motorized boating is allowed on most other lakes and one river: the Lewis River between Lewis and Shoshone lakes. All boats and float tubes require permits.

Climbing isn't recommended due to loose, crumbly rock; it's illegal in the Grand Canyon. Contact the backcountry office for information.

Fishing is allowed in certain areas and with permits. See "Permits" for more information.

Hiking takes you far from roads and crowds. Check trail conditions at visitor centers or ranger stations.

Picnic areas exist throughout the park. They usually have toilets but no drinking water. Fires are legal in areas with fire grates; inquire when you arrive.

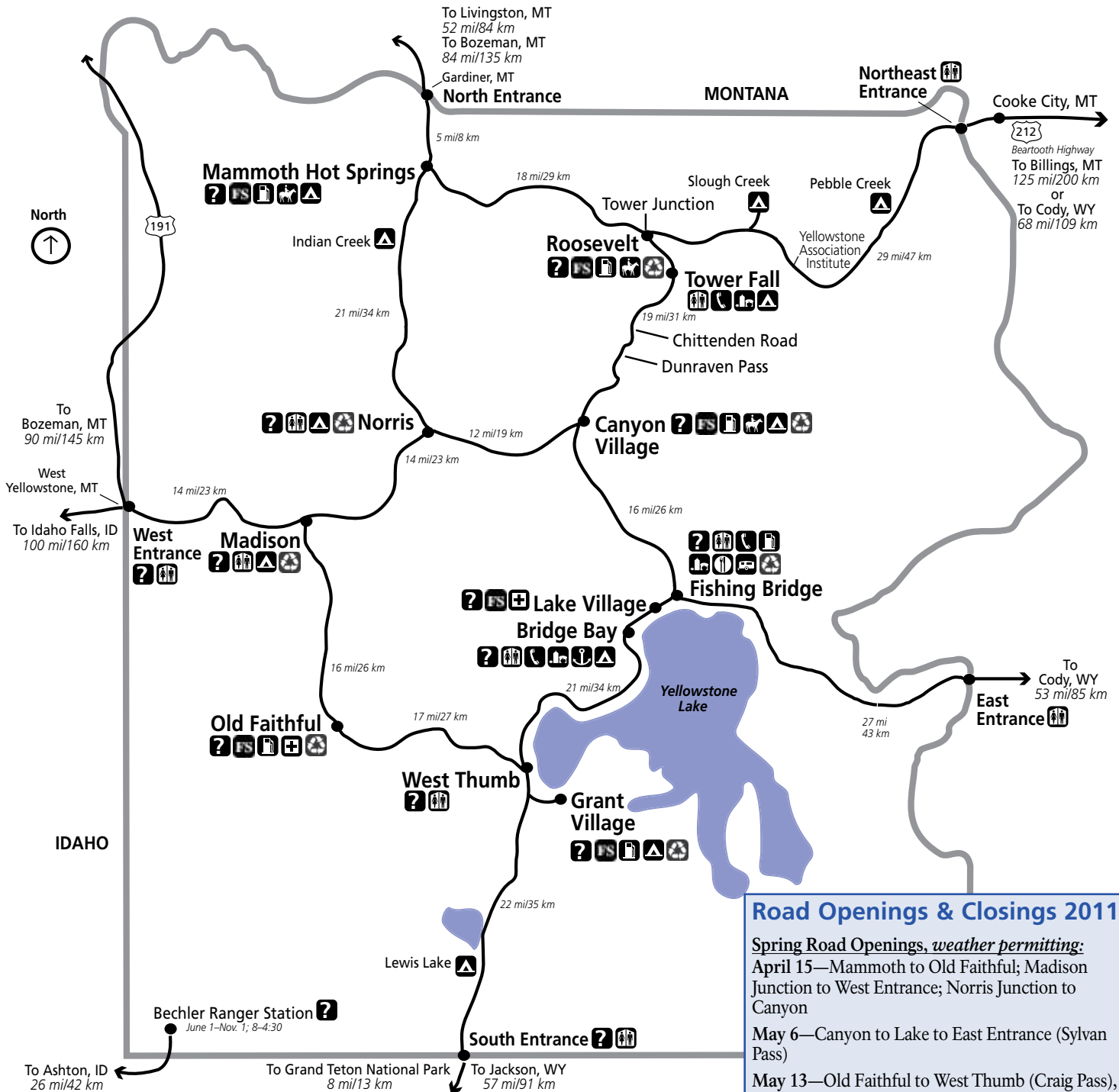
Self-guiding trails explore Mammoth Hot Springs, Fort Yellowstone, Norris Geyser Basin, Fountain Paint Pot, Upper Geyser Basin, Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, West Thumb Geyser Basin, and Mud Volcano.

Stock use depends on trail conditions. Contact the backcountry office for information. Coggins testing required. Hay restrictions enforced, see page 6, "Regulations."

Swimming, bathing, and wading are discouraged due to extremely cold water. They are illegal in hydrothermal features or streams flowing from hydrothermal features.

4 MAP

ROAD CONSTRUCTION locations and schedules can change. Check at a visitor center upon arrival.



- Full service (lodging, food service, general store, restroom)
- Visitor Center or information station
- Clinic
- Gasoline/fuel
- Marina
- General store
- Food service
- Restrooms
- Campground
- RV campground: Hard-sided units only

Cell phone service is extremely limited.

Road Openings & Closings 2011

Spring Road Openings, weather permitting:

April 15—Mammoth to Old Faithful; Madison Junction to West Entrance; Norris Junction to Canyon

May 6—Canyon to Lake to East Entrance (Sylvan Pass)

May 13—Old Faithful to West Thumb (Craig Pass), Lake to South Entrance, & Tower Junction to Tower Fall

May 27—Tower Fall to Canyon (Dunraven Pass), Beartooth Highway

Fall Road Closures

October 11—Beartooth Highway, Tower Fall to Canyon Junction (Dunraven Pass)

November 7—All park roads close for the season at 8 AM except the North Entrance to Cooke City road, which is open all year.

ROAD WORK schedules change.

For updates, check at a visitor center or entrance station upon arrival.

5 SERVICES

	ATM	Auto/RV Repair	Backcountry Office	Boat Cruises	Bus Tours	Fishing Permits	Fuel	General Store/Groceries	Horseback Riding	Hotel/Lodge Gift Shop	Lodging	Marina	Public Laundry	Public Showers	Ranger Station	Restaurant/Cafeteria	Visitor Center
Bridge Bay																	June–Sept.
Canyon																	May–Sept.
Fishing Bridge																	May–Sept.
Grant Village																	May–Sept.
Lake Village																	May–October
Mammoth Hot Springs																	May–October
Old Faithful																	May–October
Roosevelt																	June–early Sept.
Tower Fall																	May–September

Dates and hours of operation vary and are subject to change.
For more information, see “Useful Phone Numbers and Websites” below.

OTHER SERVICES



Medical Services In summer, outpatient medical services are offered at Lake, Mammoth, and Old Faithful. Ambulances, 24-hour emergency service, laboratory, pharmacy, and radiology services are available. Mammoth Clinic is open year-round. The park is on 911 service.



Accessibility *Accessibility in Yellowstone* is a free guide available at entrance stations and visitor centers in the park. It describes facilities judged to be negotiable for wheelchair users. Additional facilities are being made accessible as quickly as possible. For more information, write to: Park Accessibility Coordinator, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190



Sign Language Interpreters If you need a sign language interpreter for National Park Service interpretive programs, please call three weeks in advance: 307-344-2251.



Cell Phone Service may be available at Grant Village, Mammoth Hot Springs, and Old Faithful.

Worship Services In summer, most major denominations and interdenominational services available in the park and adjacent communities. Check at visitor centers.

Nearby Parks, Forests, & Chambers of Commerce

National Parks

Grand Teton NP
307-739-3300
Glacier NP
406-888-7800

National Forests

Shoshone
307-527-6241
Gallatin
406-587-6701
Bridger-Teton
307-739-5500
Caribou-Targhee
208-624-3151
Custer
406-657-6200

Montana Chambers of Commerce

Big Sky 406-995-3000
Billings 406-245-4111
Bozeman 406-586-5421
Gardiner 406-848-7971
Livingston 406-222-0850
West Yellowstone 406-646-7701
Cooke City–Silver Gate 406-838-2495
Red Lodge 406-446-1718

Wyoming Chambers of Commerce

Cody 307-587-2297
Jackson 307-733-3316
Dubois 307-455-2556
E. Yellowstone/Wapiti Valley 307-587-9595

Idaho Chambers of Commerce

Idaho Falls 208-523-1010
Eastern Idaho Visitor Info 800-634-3246

Useful Phone Numbers & Websites

- Yellowstone National Park: 307-344-7381; TDD 307-344-2386; www.nps.gov/yell
- Lodging & activities: 307-344-7311 or toll-free 866-Geyserland (866-439-7375); TDD 307-344-5395; www.YellowstoneNationalParkLodges.com
- Yellowstone Association (maps, books, classes): 307-344-2293; www.YellowstoneAssociation.org

6 YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT . . .

REGULATIONS

Bicycling is allowed on established public roads, parking areas, and designated routes; it is prohibited on boardwalks and backcountry trails.

Boaters must have a Coast Guard approved “wearable” personal flotation device for each person boating.

Calling to attract wildlife—bugling to elk, howling to wolves, calling to attract birds, etc.—is illegal.

Disturbing park features—possessing, collecting, removing, defacing, or destroying any natural or archeological objects or plants, animals, or minerals—is prohibited.

Driving while intoxicated or under the influence is illegal.

Feeding animals is against the law.

Fires are permitted only in designated campgrounds, in picnic areas with fire grates, and in some backcountry campsites.

Fish hooks must be barbless.

Fishing requires permits (see below).

Fishing tackle must be non-toxic. Leaded split-shot sinkers, soft lead-weighted ribbon, and other toxic tackle are not allowed.

Food must be attended at all times while not in storage. Never leave food outside your vehicle or around your campsite—*not even inside a cooler*—when you are away or asleep.

Hay & stock feed are allowed only if certified weed-free hay and processed feed; hay must be baled and covered. Trailers must be clean and empty of manure, loose hay, or feed.

Littering is illegal, unsightly, destroys hydrothermal features, and injures wildlife.

Motorcycles, motor scooters, and motor bikes are not allowed off-road or on trails. Operators must carry a valid state driver’s license; vehicles must display valid state license plates.

Pets must be leashed. They are prohibited on any trails, in the backcountry, and in hydrothermal basins. Pets are not allowed more than 100 feet (30.5 m) from a road or parking area.

Leaving a pet unattended and/or tied to an object is prohibited.

Seat belts must be worn by all occupants when the vehicle is in motion.

Service animals are allowed on trails and boardwalks in major areas; they require permits in the backcountry (see below).

Slow-moving vehicles must pull over to let others pass. Never stop or pause in the middle of the road—use pullouts.

Speed limit is 45 mph (73 kph) *or less*.

Spotlighting—viewing animals with artificial light—is illegal.

Transporting water, fish, and any other aquatic plants or animals into the park’s waters.

Weapons—possessing or using weapons (air guns, bow & arrow, crossbows, blowguns, spears, slingshots, etc.) is prohibited.

POSSESSING A FIREARM

You are responsible for knowing and following current firearms and weapons regulations for national parks. Current regulations available at www.nps.gov/yell.

PERMITS

Anglers 16 years or older require permits to fish in Yellowstone National Park; no state license is required. Younger children can fish for free under certain conditions. For these and all other fishing regulations, refer to the park website (www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/fishing) or inquire upon your arrival at ranger stations, visitor centers, or general stores.

Fishing season generally begins on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend (usually the last weekend in May) and continues through the

first Sunday of November. Fishing season opens later around Yellowstone Lake and between the lake and the Grand Canyon. For additional information, check park fishing regulations or www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/todo/fishing.

Motorized boats require permits: purchase at South Entrance, Lewis Lake Campground, Grant Village backcountry office, and Bridge Bay Ranger Station.

Non-motorized boats & float tubes require permits: purchase at Old Faithful, Mammoth, and Canyon backcountry offices, Bechler Ranger Station, West and

Northeast entrances, and West Yellowstone Visitor Information Center.

Overnight backcountry camping requires a permit, free 48 hours or less in advance or for a fee by mail beginning April 1. For more information, request a backcountry trip planner from the Backcountry Office, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190.

Service animals are allowed in the backcountry, but must have permits. Contact the Backcountry Office (address above) for more information.

ENTRANCE FEES

Private, noncommercial automobile	\$25 (7 days, both Yellowstone and Grand Teton)
Motorcycle	\$20 (7 days, both parks)
Single entry (foot, bike, ski, etc.)	\$12 (7 days, both parks)
Yellowstone–Grand Teton Pass	\$50 (valid one year from month of purchase)
America the Beautiful Pass—the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass	\$80 (valid for one year from month of purchase)
Senior Pass	\$10—for U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. who are 62 or older.
Access Pass	Free—for citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. who have been determined permanently disabled and present such documentation.

The Federal Pass Program

The “America the Beautiful—the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass” program provides several pass options for the public to use at federal recreation sites—including national parks and wildlife refuges—where entrance fees are charged. Purchase the pass at one of Yellowstone’s entrance stations or <http://store.usgs.gov/pass>.

The Golden Age Passport and Golden Access Passport are still accepted.

7 CAMPING

Fees & dates are *subject to change*; updates at www.nps.gov/yell

	Dates	Fees	Sites	Elev (ft)	Features
Bridge Bay*	5/27–9/11	\$19.50	>425	7,800	A, F, DS, G
Canyon*	6/3–9/5	\$19.50	>250	7,900	A, F, S/L, DS, G
Fishing Bridge RV*^	5/13–9/25	\$35/\$28	>325	7,800	F, S/L, DS, G, hookups
Grant Village*	6/21–9/19	\$19.50	>400	7,800	A, F, S/L, DS, G
Madison*	5/6–10/23	\$19.50	>250	6,800	A, F, G, DS
Indian Creek	6/10–9/12	\$12	75	7,300	V
Lewis Lake	6/15–11/5	\$12	85	7,800	V
Mammoth	All year	\$14	85	6,200	A, F, G
Norris	5/20–9/26	\$14	>100	7,500	F, G
Pebble Creek	6/10–9/26	\$12	>30	6,900	V
Slough Creek	5/27–10/31	\$12	29	6,250	V
Tower Fall	5/20–9/26	\$12	32	6,600	V

* Price does not include tax; reserve these sites by calling Xanterra Parks & Resorts: 307-344-7311; toll-free 866-Geyserland (866-439-7375); TDD 307-344-5395.

^ \$35 for sites with electricity; \$28 for sites without electricity

Holders of Golden Age, Senior, Golden Access, and Access passes receive approximately 50% discount on camping fees, except at Fishing Bridge RV Park where no discounts apply.

A Accessible sites available
F Flush toilets
V Vault toilets
S/L Pay showers/laundry near
DS Dump station
G Generators OK 8 AM–8 PM

How Long Can You Camp?

14 days July 1–Labor Day (first Monday in September) and 30 days the rest of the year; no limit at Fishing Bridge.

Group Camping

Available at Madison, Grant, and Bridge Bay campgrounds for large organized groups with a designated leader such as youth groups or educational groups. \$51–\$81 (plus tax) per night, depending on group size. Reservations are required. Contact Xanterra Parks & Resorts: P.O. Box 165, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190; 307-344-7311 or toll-free 866-439-7375.

Attention RV Drivers

Few campgrounds have sites for a combined vehicle length of more than 30 feet. Some details at www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit. Reservations recommended. Some communities near the park also have RV parks.

WEATHER

Spring

Cold and snow linger into June, although temperatures gradually climb. Early in spring, daytime temperatures average in the 40s and 50s; by late May and June, they may reach the 60s and 70s. Nighttime lows fall below freezing.

Summer

Daytime temperatures are usually in the 70s, occasionally the 80s, and sometimes in the 90s. Nights are generally cool, dropping into the 40s and 30s, sometimes the 20s; but may remain warmer during periods of extreme heat. June can be cool and rainy; July and August tend to be somewhat drier, although afternoon thunder showers are common.

Autumn

Weather can be pleasant, although temperatures average 10–20 degrees lower than summer. Nighttime lows can fall into the teens and lower. Snow increases in frequency and intensity as the weeks go by.

Winter

Daytime temperatures range from near zero to above freezing; night temperatures may fall well below zero. Annual snowfall averages nearly 150 inches in most of the park, except in the northern range. At higher elevations, 200–400 inches of snow have been recorded.

WINTER IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Planning a winter trip to the park? For the latest information on winter activities, go to www.nps.gov/yell/planyourvisit/winteract.htm.

TRIP CHECKLIST

- ☐ Plan itinerary around road construction.
- ☐ Make lodging reservations early.
- ☐ Reserve campsites or plan to secure campsite early in the day.
- ☐ Review park safety, regulations, and permit information.
- ☐ Pack clothes you can layer; be prepared for rain or snow, cool conditions, heat.
- ☐ Prepare day packs with snacks, water bottles, maps, sunscreen, compass.
- ☐ Call ahead for up-to-date road and weather information.
- ☐ For more trip planning materials or to take a class, visit www.YellowstoneAssociation.org.

You might also want: camera, binoculars, notebook, field guides

You can find in the park: Everything listed above, plus basic camping gear, books, groceries, souvenir clothing.

Yellowstone Trip Planner

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
National Park Service
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park
Wyoming 82190

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use: \$300



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Permit G-83